REMARKS

Claims 1 – 12 are pending in the application. Claims 13 – 18 have been cancelled. New claims 19 – 30 have been added.

Appreciation is expressed for the interview kindly accorded Stephen A. Terrile, applicants' attorney, on March 9, 2004. During the interview proposed claim amendments were discussed. Additionally, distinctions between the proposed claim amendments and the cited art were discussed.

Claims 1 – 12 stand rejected under Noori, Production and Operations Management, McGraw-Hill, Inc. (1995), pp 422-601. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention, as set forth by independent claim 1, relates to a method for scheduling work and delivery of material for mass-producing items in a factory. The method includes obtaining at least one outstanding customer order, determining a current state of an available inventory of at least one material from a plurality of material sources, and periodically generating a work schedule and a material delivery schedule for producing the item using the at least one outstanding customer order and the current state of the available inventory. Each outstanding customer of the at least one outstanding customer order includes an item ordered by a customer, and producing the item requires a required quantity of a required material. The periodically generating occurs at fixed time intervals. The periodically generating occurs more than once during a manufacturing shift. The determining the current state of the available inventory is performed such that the determining the current state of the available inventory is completed immediately prior to the generating the work schedule and the material delivery schedule. The obtaining the at least one outstanding customer order is performed such that the obtaining the customer order is completed immediately prior to the generating the work schedule and the material delivery schedule.

The present invention, as set forth by new independent claim 19, relates to a method for scheduling work and delivery of material for mass-producing information handling systems in a factory which includes obtaining a plurality of customer orders, determining a current state of an available inventory of at least one component from a plurality of component sources and

periodically generating a work schedule and a material delivery schedule for producing the ordered information handling system using the customer order and the current state of the available inventory. Each customer order of the plurality of customer orders includes an ordered information handling system. The customer order specifies components for the corresponding ordered information handling system. Producing the information handling system ordered by the customer requires a plurality of components. At least one of the plurality of components varying from one ordered information handling system and another ordered information handling system based upon components specified by the customer order. Additionally, the determining the current state of the available inventory is performed such that the determining the current state of the available inventory is completed immediately prior to the generating the work schedule and the material delivery schedule; and the obtaining each of the plurality of customer orders is performed such that the obtaining the plurality of customer orders is completed immediately prior to the generating the work schedule and the material delivery schedule.

The specification sets forth

> The phrase "[performing a function] immediately prior [to an event]" is used to describe performing a function at the last possible moment such that insufficient time remains to perform the function again before the event. This phrase is used to describe determining the current state of the available inventory and obtaining outstanding customer orders, and is intended to indicate that the inputs to generating the schedules are continuously updated so that they continuously reflect current supply and demand. With a current measure of supply and demand, work and material delivery schedules are accurate and efficient, minimizing excess inventory in the factory and producing items to fulfill customer demand as quickly and efficiently as possible. (Application, page 20, lines 7 – 15.)

Additionally, the specification sets forth

> Another advantage of the invention is that it enables the factory to initiate more than one work schedule/build cycle and material delivery schedule during a given time period, such as during a manufacturing shift, without the need to maintain substantial in-house inventory of parts and/or raw materials. Manufacturing and delivery of materials are scheduled in response to customer demand rather than driven by a demand forecast or scheduled only at fixed intervals. More than one work schedule and material delivery schedule can be provided during a given time period because the automated data warehouse provides an almost immediate source of current supply and demand. (Application, page 21, lines 5 – 12.)

Noori includes a plurality of chapters relating to various aspects of production and operations management. For example, Noori, Chapter 13 is titled "Managing Inventories:

Independent Demand Systems", Noori, Chapter 14 is titled "Aggregate Planning", Noori, Chapter 15 is titled "Material Requirements Planning", Noori, Chapter 16 is titled "Just-In-Time and Synchronous Operations", and Noori, Chapter 17 is titled "Upstream-Downstream Materials Management".

Noori does not teach or suggest a method for scheduling work and delivery of material for mass-producing items in a factory where such a method includes obtaining at least one outstanding customer order, determining a current state of an available inventory of at least one material from a plurality of material sources, and periodically generating a work schedule and a material delivery schedule for producing the item using the at least one outstanding customer order and the current state of the available inventory. Much less such a method in which each outstanding customer order of the at least one outstanding customer order includes an item ordered by a customer, and producing the item requires a required quantity of a required material, the periodically generating occurs at fixed time intervals, the periodically generating occurs more than once during a manufacturing shift, the determining the current state of the available inventory is performed such that the determining the current state of the available inventory is completed immediately prior to the generating the work schedule and the material delivery schedule, and the obtaining the at least one outstanding customer order is performed such that the obtaining the customer order is completed immediately prior to the generating the work schedule and the material delivery schedule, all as required by independent claim 1. Claims 2 – 11 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least this reason.

Additionally, Noori does not disclose or suggest a method for scheduling work and delivery of material for mass-producing information handling systems in a factory which includes obtaining a plurality of customer orders, determining a current state of an available inventory of at least one component from a plurality of component sources and periodically generating a work schedule and a material delivery schedule for producing the ordered information handling system using the customer order and the current state of the available inventory. Much less such a method in which each customer order of the plurality of customer orders includes an ordered information handling system; the customer order specifies components for the corresponding ordered information handling system; producing the information handling system ordered by the customer requires a plurality of components; and, at

least one of the plurality of components varying from one ordered information handling system and another ordered information handling system based upon components specified by the customer order. Much less such a system in which the determining the current state of the available inventory is performed such that the determining the current state of the available inventory is completed immediately prior to the generating the work schedule and the material delivery schedule; and the obtaining each of the plurality of customer orders is performed such that the obtaining the plurality of customer orders is completed immediately prior to the generating the work schedule and the material delivery schedule. All as required by new independent claim 19. Claims 20 – 30 depend from new claim 19 and are allowable for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

The claims have been amended to improve clarity. In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile on March 11, 2004.

Attorney for Applicant(s) — Date of Signature: 3/11/04

Respectfully submitted,

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